UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/AC.51/1991/3
4 April 1991

ORIGINAL: ENGLISH

COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND CO-ORDINATION
Thirty-first session
13 May-7 June 1991
Item 3 (d) of the provisional agenda*

PROGRAMME QUESTIONS: EVALUATION

In-depth evaluation of the development issues and policies programme: Economic Commission for Africa

Final report of the Secretary-General

SUMMARY

At its thirtieth session, in 1990, the Committee for Programme and Coordination recommended that the final evaluation report on the development issues and policies programme of the Economic Commission for Africa, to be submitted to it at its thirty-first session, should bring together the findings, conclusions and recommendations of existing evaluations and reviews, and follow-up actions by the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies. The present report reviews the evolution of the principal mandates and strategies of the programme, summarizes the findings of completed assessments and evaluations of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres and the Pan-African Documentation and Information System, and provides an examination of the effects of extrabudgetary resources on the Commission's programmes. The final section contains recommendations which can be the basis of action by the Committee.

* E/AC.51/1991/1.

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INTRODUCTION

1. The programme of the Economic Commission for Africa (ECA) on development issues and policies has become the fulcrum of efforts to evaluate the role and contributions of ECA activities to regional economic cooperation and integration and, in the light of recent intergovernmental decisions, of formulating credible and effective international responses to the economic and social crisis in Africa.

2. The Committee for Programme and Coordination (CPC), at its twenty-seventh session, in 1987, recommended that the ECA programme be included in the in-depth evaluation of the major programme on development issues and policies. The Committee further noted that "the study should enable ECA to establish priorities in its activities to develop a programme of action for providing support to member States in addresing major economic and social problems through regional and subregional cooperation efforts". 1/ At its twenty-ninth session, in 1989, the Committee considered an in-depth evaluation report that reviewed the priorities and implementation of the ECA programme and policies on development issues (E/AC.51/1989/4/Add.2 and Add.2/Corr.1), and it recommended modifications of the programme structure. The Committee took note of the report but also requested that an in-depth evaluation of the ECA programme be carried out and submitted to it at its thirty-first session. 2/ In an earlier and related action, the General Assembly, in its resolution 43/216 of 21 December 1988, endorsed the concurring observations and recommendations of the Board of Auditors 3/ and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions (ACABQ) (A/43/674, para. 13) on the question of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs) and the Pan-African Documentation and Information System (PADIS).

3. At its thirtieth session, in 1990, the Committee considered the progress report of the Secretary-General (E/AC.51/1990/5), which contained information on the status of planned evaluation studies and a summary of the conclusions and recommendations of a completed self-evaluation of subprogramme 1 of the programme on development issues and policies. The report also included proposals on the approach to be taken in the final report. Following its consideration of that report, the Committee recommended that the final evaluation report, to be submitted to it at its thirty-first session, should bring together the findings, conclusions and recommendations of existing evaluations and reviews, and follow-up actions by the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies. 4/

4. The present report includes an analytical summary of the findings and recommendations of:

(a) The report on the Structures, Organization and Operations of the Multinational Programming and Operational Centres conducted by a Review Team appointed by the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and the Executive Secretary of ECA (E/ECA/CM.16/13);

(b) The report of the evaluation mission of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) on PADIS.

5. Several other evaluations are also being or have been undertaken as part of the broader and continuing intergovernmental concern and interest in evolving an effective international and regional response to the situation. In its resolution 45/178 A of 19 December 1990, the General Assembly scheduled a final review and appraisal of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 (Assembly resolution S-13/2, annex). At its forty-sixth session, the Assembly will have before it the report of the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole, established for the purpose of preparing that review, and the assessment of the Administrative Committee on Coordination (ACC) on the implementation of the Programme of Action.

6. In 1988, the Commission prepared an assessment entitled "African Alternative Framework for Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation" (A/44/315, annex). The twenty-fifth session of the Commission and 16th meeting of the Conference of Ministers of ECA reviewed the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action and decided in resolution 699 (XXV) to submit, in May 1991, a special memorandum to the Ad Hoc Committee of the Whole on the basis of the Commission's assessment of the United Nations Programme of Action.

7. At its twenty-sixth session, in May 1991, the Commission will also conduct an assessment of the first decade of the Lagos Plan of Action. The conclusions and recommendations of the Commission in that regard will help update strategies for regional economic cooperation and integration.

8. Taken together, the findings and conclusions contained in those reviews and assessments will provide, when all are completed, a realistic assessment of the context and environment of the programmes of the Commission in general and its programme on development issues and policies in particular. The present report focuses on those aspects of the ECA programme on development issues and policies which have been the subject of completed evaluations and consequent intergovernmental review and actions.

9. Section I of the present report reviews the evolution of the principal mandates and strategies of the programme and its contributions to the implementation of intergovernmental objectives, especially those endorsed in the Lagos Plan of Action and the United Nations Programme of Action. Section II of the report summarizes the findings of completed assessments and evaluations of the MULPOCs and PADIS. Section III is an examination of the effects of extrabudgetary resources on ECA programmes. The final section contains recommendations that can be the basis of action by the Committee.

I. EVOLUTION OF THE MANDATES AND STRATEGIES OF THE ECA PROGRAMME ON DEVELOPMENT ISSUES AND POLICIES

10. The mandates of ECA programmes are based on resolutions and decisions of the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Commission itself. Further, the Commission is often a conduit for major assessments of economic and social development by the Organization of Africn Unity (OAU) or joint initiatives of ECA and OAU. The secretariats of the two organizations have formed a steering

committee for collaborative work. Such assessments and joint initiatives are, in turn, submitted for endorsement by the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly.

11. Twelve resolutions of the Assembly, four of the Council and eight of the Commission are cited in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (see A/45/6, prog. 30) as legislative mandates of ECA activities on development issues and policies. All of those resolutions, adopted within the past five years (1986 to 1990), reaffirm the responsibility of the Commission by elaborating the scope and strategies of the programme on development issues and policies.

12. A review of the current and past resolutions, including those defining the terms of reference of the Commission, illustrates the scope of the activities of the Commission, which consist of (a) facilitating concerted action for strengthening economic cooperation in the region through analysis and assessment of development trends, strategies and policies, (b) overcoming structural and transnational obstacles to economic development through more coherent subregional economic cooperation and integration, and (c) facilitating a coherent policy response on the part of the international community and African Governments to the critical economic situation in Africa.

13. The first category of mandated activity illustrates the regional dimensions of international cooperation for development, in which regional commissions of the United Nations system are mandated to conduct research and analysis on development issues. The responsibility of the Commissions in that regard was reaffirmed by the Assembly in its resolution 32/197, in paragraph 21 of annex IV of which it authorized the regional commissions to "provide inputs for global policy-making processes of the competent United Nations organs and participate fully in the implementation of the relevant policy and programming decisions taken by these organs". In ECA, the programme on development issues and policies, as elaborated in the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 (extended to 1991), enables the Commission to perform the functions of collecting, evaluating and analysing information on socio-economic conditions. Other activities within this programme are designed to service subsidiary regional intergovernmental bodies or promote technical cooperation among member States.

14. The second category of mandated activity aims at coordinating and strengthening subregional economic cooperation and integration. The strategies for subregional cooperation are derived from the terms of reference of the Commission and the Lagos Plan of Action for the Implementation of the Monrovia Strategy for the Economic Development of Africa (A/S-11/14, annex I). The Lagos Plan of Action, adopted in 1980 and endorsed by the General Assembly, envisaged the strengthening of existing subregional communities and the establishment of other economic groupings to cover the entire continent and the coordination and harmonization among existing and future economic groupings for a gradual establishment of an African common market.

15. The third type of mandated activity reflects efforts to develop a coherent and coordinated international policy response to the recurrent critical economic situation. The most recent principal mandates for those efforts are incorporated

in the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990, which the General Assembly adopted at its thirteenth special session. The Programme of Action, reaffirmed and elaborated in subsequent resolutions of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly and the Commission, is the basis of a new programme in the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 entitled "Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and transformation" (A/45/6, prog. 45). The programme is designed to provide a framework for United Nations system-wide activities. The objectives of the programme are the following:

(a) To ensure that the critical problems confronting Africa will be addressed effectively and urgently in a coordinated manner by the international community, including the United Nations system;

(b) To encourage the international community to translate its commitment to assisting Africa in achieving economic development and transformation into effective policy measures;

(c) To mobilize increased resource flows to Africa;

(d) To increase awareness at the global level of the critical economic situation in Africa and the actions needed to improve that situation;

(e) To support African countries in their efforts to enhance their own endogenous capacity with a view to achieving sustained growth and development by, inter alia, providing, at the request of individual Governments, advice on appropriate economic policy reforms.

The coordination of the United Nations activities for the implementation of the Programme of Action is assigned to the Office of the Director-General for Development and International Economic Cooperation. ECA will be closely associated with the policy and substantive aspects of the programme through the Conference of Ministers of the Commission and through ACC.

16. The objectives and strategies of the ECA programme on development issues and policies in the medium-term plans for the periods 1984-1991 and 1992-1997 incorporate those mandates. The strategies of the eight subprogrammes in the 1984-1989 plan, subsequently extended to 1991, addressed regional aspects of global obstacles and challenges to development, as analysed and assessed at the regional level in the Lagos Plan of Action, and at the global level in the International Development Strategy for the Third United Nations Development Decade (Assembly resolution 35/56, annex). The programme therefore subsumed a broad spectrum of activities designed to contribute to the coordination of appropriate collective regional policy responses and strategies and to the monitoring and assessment of the implementation of internationally agreed objectives and strategies for the decade. In the current biennium, 1990-1991, activities in support of subregional economic cooperation are included in 7 of the 16 programmes of the medium-term plan.

17. In the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 the structure of the programmes has been modified. The subprogramme on development issues and policies

focuses on activities that aim at better understanding socio-economic trends and policy issues. The promotion of regional economic cooperation and integration is now identified as a distinct subprogramme that includes the activities to be carried out by the five MULPOCs and their coordinating unit at ECA headquarters, the Economic Cooperation Office. Other subprogrammes will, however, continue to include activities in support of subregional economic cooperation, as shown in annex I. At its thirtieth session, CPC recommended the addition of two other subprogrammes on the external debt crisis in Africa and on tourism. 5/ The modified structure brings into sharper focus the dominant concerns of the States members of the Commission.

II. EXISTING ASSESSMENTS AND EVALUATIONS

A. Subregional strategies for economic cooperation and development

1. Objectives and issues

18. In the Final Act of Lagos (A/S-11/14, annex II), the States members of OAU reaffirmed their commitment to set up, by the year 2000, on the basis of a treaty to be concluded, an African economic community so as to ensure the economic, social and cultural integration of the African continent. To achieve that goal, the member States committed themselves to:

(a) Strengthening the existing regional economic communities and establishing other economic groupings in other regions of Africa so as to cover the continent as a whole (Central Africa, eastern Africa, southern Africa and northern Africa);

(b) Promoting coordination and harmonization among existing and future economic groupings for a gradual establishment of an African common market;

(c) Taking measures to effect the establishment of an African common market and other measures that would lead to the attainment of the aims and objectives of the African economic community.

19. The Lagos Plan of Action incorporated subregional measures and strategies in all its aspects and sectors in order to complement national measures and strategies and to serve as the foundation for regional economic integration.

20. In food and agriculture, the Plan called on member States to "expand their economic and technical cooperation in food and agriculture through increased trade, exchange of manpower, technology, and joint development programmes at the subregional and regional levels" (A/S-11/14, annex I, para. 47).

21. In industry (ibid., para. 70), the Plan enumerated a broad spectrum of measures, including preparation of subregional plans for the creation of major industrial complexes, creation of subregional institutions to make inventory of and exploit shared natural resources, giving high priority to the establishment of multinational industries, harmonization of tax systems at the subregional levels in order to facilitate industrial cooperation.

22. In response to those mandates for subregional cooperation, ECA established in 1977 five Multinational Programming and Operational Centres (MULPOCs). The Centres were conceived as vehicles for promoting subregional economic cooperation both at the intergovernmental and ECA-secretariat levels. To that effect, ECA assisted member States in drafting legal instruments of subregional cooperation and in establishing and servicing subregional intergovernmental bodies. Those subregional intergovernmental bodies were to coordinate development policies and promote joint programmes of member States of the subregion.

23. ECA also established a secretariat unit responsible for overall policies for subregional economic cooperation and integration. As of 1982, the Economic Cooperation Office had 13 regular budget Professional posts, with an additional 24 Professional posts assigned to the Centres and funded from extrabudgetary resources. Over the next four biennial budgets, funding of the staff of the MULPOCs was transferred totally to the regular budget. Currently, the staffing of the five Centres consists of 28 Professional and 24 General Service posts with another 11 General Service staff funded through general temporary assistance (see A/C.5/45/57, para. 14).

24. As shown in annex III, many ECA headquarters-based substantive divisions provide substantive and technical support to the MULPOCs in the form of reports and studies for meetings of subregional policy organs.

2. Evaluation of MULPOCs

(a) Findings and conclusions

25. In its resolution 43/216, the General Assembly endorsed the concurring recommendations of ACABQ and the United Nations Board of Auditors that the achievements of the MULPOCs be evaluated. In 1988, the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management and the Executive Secretary of ECA appointed a team to conduct such an evaluation of the Centres. The Review Team visited all MULPOC offices and 12 selected member States covering all the subregions and interviewed senior level officials of Governments and of intergovernmental organizations and United Nations officials in those countries. The Team also held intensive consultations with the staff and officials of ECA and the MULPOCs on impediments to improving the performance of the Centres and the effectiveness of their programmes.

26. The major findings and conclusions of the Review Team were presented in an Executive Summary and in paragraphs at the end of each chapter of the report (E/ECA/CM.16/13). The points of particular relevance to the evaluation are the following:

(a) The institutional framework of the MULPOCs, especially their policy organs, the respective subregional Councils of Ministers, clearly duplicate those of ECA and the major intergovernmental organizations (para. 4 of the summary and conclusions);

(b) The MULPOCs have not been able to exercise their multinational programming role or provide adequate technical support and advisory services in the subregional development process. They have failed to establish a strong professional presence in the subregion nor do they play any meaningful catalytic role in the economic and social development of the subregions (para. 6 of the summary and conclusions);

(c) One of the greatest institutional handicaps of the MULPOCs is that their available expertise is generally at variance with the established priorities of the member States. The rather top-heavy functional relationship between ECA headquarters and the MULPOCs has considerably eroded and weakened the spirit behind the establishment of the MULPOCs (para. 7 of the summary and conclusions);

(d) Member States are unevenly distributed among the MULPOC subregions. Some of the MULPOCs are just too large, in terms of number of countries and the geographic area to be covered, to provide delivery capacity to the Member States. Some are too small to qualify as a full subregional entity (para. 8 of the summary and conclusions);

(e) The resources made available to the MULPOCs, both human and financial, have been grossly inadequate. This constitutes the single most important obstacle in the fulfilment of their mandate. This scarcity of resources has been aggravated by the withdrawal of UNDP funding of the MULPOCs in 1982, as well as the lack of interest by the donor community. In the assessment of the Review Team, the minimum additional resources required consist of 33 posts at the Professional level and above; 30 General Service and other support staff, and about $US 1 565,100 for non-staff resources (paras. 101-102 of the main text and table 5).

(b) Recommendations of the Review Team

27. On the basis of its assessment, the Review Team proposed the reorientation and strengthening of the activities of the Centres and the improvement of their management. The main recommendations pertinent to the evaluation were (para. 9 of the summary and conclusions):

(a) Immediate action should be taken to transform the MULPOCs into ECA-Subregional Technical Assistance Programmes (ECA/STAPs). New efforts should be made to reorientate the United Nations strategy for subregional cooperation and integration. The ECA-STAPs should also be the sole United Nations agency for providing technical support and advisory services for promotion of subregional cooperation and integration;

(b) The ECA-STAPs should be strengthened and be provided with adequate human and financial resources without which they would hardly operate better than the existing MULPOCs;

(c) In order for the ECA-STAPs to become effective, the ECA should further decentralize some of its operational activities and resources to the new subregional institutions;

(d) The Secretary-General of the United Nations should submit annual reports to the General Assembly on the implementation and follow-up of the recommendations contained in the report.

3. Follow-up actions

28. The Conference of Ministers of ECA assessed the report of the Review Team and submitted its observations on the findings and recommendation of the report in a memorandum submitted to the General Assembly through the Economic and Social Council (Council resolution 1990/76, annex). The Council of Ministers:

(a) Reaffirmed the objectives and purposes of the MULPOCs (para. 5);

(b) Noted that inadequacies in resources have been the major constraint in the ability of the MULPOCs to fulfil their mandate, and stated that ECA's capacity to decentralize staff and resources to the MULPOCs was stretched to the limit (para. 10);

(c) Endorsed the proposal of the Review Team that the financial and human resources of the MULPOCs be significantly increased and they be provided with cost-effective minimal core staff that will enable them to have immediate impact on their respective subregions (para. 11).

29. The Economic and Social Council in resolution 1990/76 took into consideration the recommendations of the Conference of Ministers and urged the General Assembly to provide the Centres with sufficient resources.

30. In a subsequent report on the findings and recommendations of the Review Team, submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-fifth session, the Secretary-General stated:

> The resource constraint has been the nucleus of MULPOC troubles. No matter what structural reorganization of the subregional system is effective, it will not work if the problem of adequate human and financial resources is not at the same time fully addressed. It is, therefore, estimated that MULPOCs, to be able to meet the new responsibilities adequately, would need to be strengthened both under the regular budget and from extrabudgetary resources. As regards the regular budget portion of financing, it has been estimated that the staff resources of the Centres need be increased by eight additional Professional posts and ten General Service posts. (A/C.5/45/57, para. 22).

31. In an oral statement to the Fifth Committee (see A/C.5/45/SR.44 and corrigendum), the Chairman of ACABQ indicated the Advisory Committee's intentions to review the Secretary-General's proposal for additional posts. To facilitate its review, the Chairman stated that the Committee would request a report which clearly indicated the programme of work of the MULPOCs as distinct from the work of the Economic Commission for Africa. The report would also need to provide a breakdown of the various sources of funding for all the posts. In its resolution 45/248, section XI, of 21 December 1990, the General Assembly endorsed the recommendations of the Advisory Committee.

4. Observations on the programmatic implications of these assessments and actions

32. The Lagos Plan of Action envisioned subregional strategies as a framework for joint programmes and the foundation of regional economic cooperation and integration. The importance of subregional economic cooperation has been reaffirmed many times since. But the MULPOCs have failed to establish a strong professional presence in the subregion and they do not play any meaningful catalytic role in the economic and social development of the subregions. That results in a lack of fit between the orientation of the MULPOC work programmes and country-level priorities and strategies. In addition, the objectives and, therefore, expectations of subregional cooperation programmes have been consistently much broader and more ambitious than resource availability could support, which has undermined the effectiveness and sustainability of the MULPOCs in the past.

33. If the scope of the activities of the subregional centres does not change substantially, then, even if the additional resources proposed in the report of the Secretary-General referred to in paragraph 30 above are adopted, the new ECA-STAPs are in danger of suffering from the same mismatch as the old MULPOCs between the intended scope of the Centres' activities and the resources available to them. The lack of fit between the national priorities and subregional strategies of the MULPOCs is also likely to continue.

34. The Review Team and the Conference of Ministers of ECA supported the continuation of the five subregional Centres. This raises three basic issues. First, is there a minimum staffing level required to operate an effective subregional office with substantive responsibilities? Second, what should be the distribution of functions between the subregional offices and the central office at ECA headquarters, and to what extent can the staff resources of ECA be decentralized to subregional offices? Third, what sources of funding are needed for the support of the Centres?

35. A comparison of staffing levels for subregional offices of ECA and the Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC) is, even with all the qualifications that such comparisons between institutions in different regions necessarily require, still suggestive of the minimum staffing level of substainable subregional offices. As shown in table 1 the staffing level of the smaller of the two principal subregional offices in ECLAC that conduct substantive activities is on average about three times that of the largest of the MULPOCs.

36. The relative decentralization that sustainable subregional offices require can also be suggested by the comparison between ECLAC and ECA in table 2. In ECLAC, about 26 per cent of the Commission's regular budget posts are at offices outside of headquarters, compared to about 10 per cent for ECA.

Table 1. Staffing of subregional offices with substantive activities, ECLAC and ECA, 1990-1991

	Professional	Local level	Total
ECLAC:			
Mexico City	25	51	76
Port of Spain	16	24	40
Other offices a/	9	12	21
	50	87	137
ECA: MULPOCS based in			
Gisenyi	5	2	7
Lusaka	5	8	13
Niamey	8	5	13
Tangiers	4	5	9
Yaounde	6	4	10
	28	24	52

Source: A/44/6/Rev.1 and A/C.5/45/57. In addition to the posts shown for the MULPOCs, general temporary assistance funds are being used to finance the equivalent of 11 local level posts: 5 in Niamey, 2 in Gisenyi and 4 in Yaounde.

a/ Offices with liaison functions: Bogotá, Brasilia, Buenos Aires, Montevideo and Washington, D.C.

Table 2. Distribution of regular budget posts in central and and subregional offices: ECLAC and ECA, 1990-1991

		Professional	Local level	Total
ECLAC:	Santiago	126	258	384
	Subregional offices	50	87	137
		176	345	521
	Subregional as percentage of total	28.4	25.2	26.3
ECA:	Addis Ababa	182	350	532
	MULPOCs	28	24	52
		210	374	584
	Proposed additions to MULPOCs	8	10	18
		218	384	602
	MULPOCs as percentage of total:			
	(a) Current appropriation	13.3	6.9	9.8
	(b) With proposed additions	16.5	8.9	11.6
	Memoranda items:			
	Staffing level proposed by Review Team	64	74	138
	MULPOCs as percentage of total with this level of staffing and no decentralization of current staff in Addis Ababa	26.0	17.5	17.9

Source: A/44/6/Rev.1, section 12, annex I, and section 13, table 13.5; A/C.5/45/57 (MULPOCs); and E/ECA/CM.16/13, table 4 (Review Team).

37. If the resource levels of the MULPOCs proposed at the forty-fifth session of the General Assembly were approved, ECA would still only have less than 12 per cent of its authorized regular budget posts decentralized. The staffing level proposed by the Review Team would, with no decentralization of staff currently at ECA headquarters, bring the proportion of ECA staff outside headquarters closer to the ECLAC level. It is likely that such a level of additional resources would have to be achieved through increased extrabudgetary funds to support operational activities of the Centres, perhaps combined with some decentralization of staff currently at ECA headquarters. Annex I indicates that there may be some scope for decentralization at Addis Ababa.

38. In planning the future work programme of the Centres, it will be important (a) to define the minimal critical size of each Centre and (b) to determine realistically the extent of any possible decentralization of the existing functions

in Addis Ababa and the outlook for extrabudgetary funds before final decisions are taken on the programmes of the Centres or on additional posts needed from the regular budget.

B. Collection, management and dissemination of development information

1. Scope and objectives of PADIS

39. The collection of development information, primarily statistical and bibliographic data, is an essential prerequisite for analysis and evaluation of socio-economic trends and an important part of the mandate of the Commission. ECA first established PADIS in 1980 as an extrabudgetary project funded by UNDP.

40. Subprogrammes seven and eight of PADIS were added in 1984 as revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1984-1989 (extended to 1991) to enhance the Commission's capacity to coordinate the collection and management of development information.

41. The overall objectives of PADIS, as elaborated in the development information component of the ECA subprogramme on development issues and policies, is to establish a regional information system in Africa that will serve as a conduit for information and data on development information centered around national, subregional and regional networks, to which all member States will contribute voluntarily in order to share their management information experiences. The past three biennial programme budgets, covering the period 1986-1991, did not directly appropriate regular budget resources for activities under subprogrammes seven and eight. UNDP conceived and extended the project in three successive phases. The third phase of the project came to an end in 31 December 1990. In the third phase of the project UNDP anticipated that the regular budget of the Commission would assume some of the costs of the Central Coordination Office of PADIS. The 1990-1991 regular budget of the Commission, however, only made provision for the post of chief of computer services in the administration and common services of the ECA secretariat. At the end of 1990, therefore, there was neither a firm commitment on the part of UNDP to extend funding of the project nor were provisions made in the regular budget for financing the continuation of support activities.

2. UNDP evaluation of PADIS

(a) Observations and findings

42. In order to decide on the future funding and orientation of its support UNDP conducted an evaluation of the PADIS project (RAF/86/053) in 1990. The observations and findings of the evaluation mission pertinent to the main activities and outputs of the project are summarized below:

(a) The objectives proposed in the project document are commensurate with the inputs provided, and the resulting outputs have significantly improved access to available information (para. A.4.3.1);

(b) The creation of a development information system and network for Africa, which PADIS is assigned to address, still remains an important and worthy objective meriting the support of the international donor community (finding 1);

(c) The need for and usefulness of the activities under Project RAF/86/053, PADIS III, are recognized and expressed as such by the member States (finding 2);

(d) In working towards meeting the objectives of the project, in implementing the activities directed at the realization of these objectives and in producing the related outputs, UNDP resources have been used in a useful way and in accordance with the conditions as mentioned in the project document (finding 3);

(e) Starting from a meagre basis, PADIS III has shown remarkable progress in all fields related to its immediate objectives (growth in number of national participating centers, increase in number of data banks, increase in contents of data banks, increased use of products and services, training, advisory services and servicing of meetings provided) (finding 37);

(f) Decision makers and planners seem largely oriented towards numerical data, most of which are acquired at the national level. Information sought from external sources mainly pertains to macroeconomic, sectoral and project related data at the subregional level and to data facilitating comparative intercountry analysis (finding 14);

(g) The use of databases has been less than optimal: (i) the databases and the publications derived from them are not known to many of the intended users (paras. C.1.4.1 to C.1.4.4); (ii) requests for on-line database searches have also been handicapped by the state of the communications in the continent (para. C.1.3.1); (iii) there is persistent lack of knowledge of actual and potential users and their respective needs (para. A.3). There exists substantial mismatch between the main targeted user group (decision makers and planners) and the actual user group (researchers) (finding 13); and (iv) in addition, confusion as to what development information is or should be is widespread (finding 15);

(h) The subregional centres have not become operational because of difficulties in the funding of the components the host Governments agreed to finance (finding 40);

(i) Developments in information technology have rendered the need for subregional centres as collection and processing nodes redundant (finding 41);

(j) Provided adequate resources are made available, subregional centres can play a useful role in bringing PADIS closer to the field and in decentralized efforts in the fields of sensitization, training and advisory services (finding 42).

(b) Recommendations

43. In the light of its findings, the evaluation mission made the following four major recommendations:

(a) PADIS should redesign the project in the next phase to reflect the expressed need for meeting specific development information requirements of planners, policy makers and decision makers in the member States;

(b) PADIS should take immediate steps to identify its target audience;

(c) Funding for PADIS should be continued through the UNDP Fifth Cycle (1991-1996), and that it be integrated into the ECA organizational structure;

(d) Member States should honour the obligations they choose to engage in and strive more vigorously for the implementation of the resolutions passed on their behalf.

4. Follow-up actions

44. The Administrator of UNDP decided that the project should be continued through 1991 and that savings from the project should be utilized for that purpose. Future financing, however, would be decided in a tripartite meeting, to be held in May 1991, of UNDP, ECA and representatives of participating Governments. UNDP has advised ECA to shift part of the costs of the administrative and support services to the regular budget of the Commission, and has indicated that it does not envision funds for subregional centres that are not already in existence.

5. Observations on programmatic implications

45. The review of the PADIS project raises two programmatic issues of general relevance:

(a) There is a strong relationship of mutual dependence between activities funded from the extrabudgetary sources and those funded from the regular budget. In the case of PADIS, the project included some activities of the type that are normally funded by the regular budget that were justified as support and administrative costs of the project activities. Some of these support and administrative costs are now being shifted to the regular budget;

(b) The subregional activities were problematical; they had not become operational due to difficulties in funding government components, and developments in technology have made subregional centres unnecessary for collection or processing of information.

C. Contributions of the programme to regional economic cooperation and to international responses to the recurrent economic and social crisis

46. The contribution of the programme on economic cooperation and integration and on development of information systems has largely been covered in the assessment of the subprogrammes on the MULPOCs and PADIS. In addition, the programme on development issues and policies is central to those aspects of the ECA mandate and terms of reference which concern the facilitation of regional economic cooperation through analysis and assessment of socio-economic trends in support of the deliberations of the ECA Conference of Ministers. With regard to those other areas covered by the programme, in-depth analyses of the trends and policy requirements of socio-economic development in the region have continued to be provided. There is now increased awareness among policy makers of development planning needs and objectives, as well as of the instruments that are required for successful implementation. Assistance continues to be provided to countries on economic modelling and the establishment of short-term forecasting systems. Special efforts have been made to link activities in these areas with the activities in capacity-building of training institutions in macroeconomic policies and long-term planning such as those carried out at the Institute of Economic Development and Planning (IDEP).

47. The programme also continues to provide a useful forum for discussion of the special problems and needs of the group of least developed, land-locked and island developing countries to formulate common positions on international issues of concern to them. In human resources, many important initiatives have been undertaken in recent years. Through the Conference of Vice-Chancellors, Presidents and Rectors of Institutions for Higher Learning in Africa, the role of higher education in development has been better defined and has led to a number of national and regional programmes aimed at making higher education more relevant to development. Many studies have also been undertaken on problems of human resources that have strengthened the information base for policy formulation in the field of human resources. Major international conferences on the Human Dimension of African Economic Recovery and Development and on Popular Participation have helped to significantly change thinking on development by promoting the new widely accepted notion of human centred and democratized development approach in Africa.

48. With the recurrence of the economic and social crisis, the collection and analysis of information on social and economic trends and policies have also become linked with the preparation of analysis and assessments for use in the deliberations of the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly. The findings and assessments conducted within regular activities of the ECA programme on development issues and policies were important inputs to the analysis and conclusions arrived at and incorporated in the United Nations Programme of Action. Since its adoption, the secretariat of ECA has completed an evaluation of structural adjustment programmes, which has been supported by major donors and some multilateral development institutions. This study became the basis of a broad policy statement, the African Alternative Framework to Structural Adjustment Programmes for Socio-Economic Recovery and Transformation (A/44/315, annex) by the Conference of Ministers and Heads of States and Governments of OAU. The statement

was submitted to and endorsed by the General Assembly in resolution 43/27 of 18 November 1988. The Assembly further called upon the international community to use the Alternative Framework as a basis for dialogue on adjustment.

III. EFFECTS OF EXTRABUDGETARY RESOURCES ON PRIORITIES AMONG ECA PROGRAMMES

A. Priorities among ECA programmes

49. The United Nations Programme of Action contains an authoritative consensus statement of priorities, to which the ECA member States have agreed and which the international community has accepted as the basis of support to national, subregional and regional programmes of technical co-operation for development. It assigns the highest level of priority to agricultural development, other sectors in support of agriculture, drought and desertification, human resources development, planning and utilization and policy reforms through improved management of the economy, public policies and structural adjustment measures and programmes. At the subregional level, the priorities re-emphasize agricultural development and drought and desertification measures and programmes, especially those States in the Sahel and members of the Intergovernmental Authority for Drought and Development. At the regional level, the Programme reaffirmed the need for strengthening the institutional framework through improved management and rationalization of the activities of African development institutions and the elimination of duplication of efforts.

50. In the context of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 on regional development cooperation for Africa, the General Assembly endorsed, in resolution 45/253, section I, paragraph 1, the recommendations of CPC that high priority should be assigned to human resource development in the context of development issues and policies (subprogramme 1), agricultural and rural development (subprogramme 2), industrial development (subprogramme 10), energy (subprogramme 14), and transport, communications and tourism (subprogramme 17) and the new subprogramme on economic cooperation and integration proposed by CPC in paragraph 263 (c) of its report.

B. Methodologies for assessing the effects of extrabudgetary funds on priorities

51. The medium-term plan for the period 1976-1979 contained an extensive analysis of growth and changing priorities in the United Nations budget. 6/ It reviewed issues of definition, trends in overall growth, and in programme and non-programme expenditure. The measures used for analysis were percentage shares in resources among programmes, and real growth for both regular budget and extrabudgetary funds, with the rankings of programmes with respect to these measures used as indicators of priority.

52. Three lessons for planning were drawn from that analysis:

(a) Half of the resources allocated to United Nations programmes are allocated through mechanisms over which the General Assembly has limited influence;

(b) Those extrabudgetary resources are capable of more rapid change from year to year than the regular budget's funds;

(c) If the General Assembly wished to set overall priorities it would be necessary to anticipate the future trends in extrabudgetary resources, and take these into account in allocating regular budget funds.

53. A similar analysis and the same conclusions were presented in the medium-term plan for the period 1978-1981. 7/

54. The role of extrabudgetary funds in the budgets of United Nations organizations has been the subject of numerous analyses since these early efforts, the latest being a report of the Joint Inspection Unit, entitled "Extrabudgetary resources of the United Nations: towards transparency of presentation, management and reporting" (see A/45/797). That report, although focused on other matters, contained part of one chapter on the distribution of extrabudgetary resources and their impact on priorities.

55. The analyses that follow utilize methodologies similar to those used in the reports cited above.

C. Significance of extrabudgetary funds in ECA

56. In absolute terms for the biennium 1988-1989, ECA attracted the second largest volume of extrabudgetary (XB) funds of the regional commissions, ECLAC having the largest volume. ECA's XB supplement to its regular budget (RB) resources was also considerably smaller than ESCAP, about the same as ECLAC and much larger than ECE and ESCWA.

Table 3. Proportion of extrabudgetary resources in the regional commissions total budgets, 1988-1989

Budget section	Commission	Percentage of XB
10	ECE	10.6
11	ESCAP	52.2
12	ECLAC	36.2
13	ECA	35.3
14	ESCWA	12.2

Source: A/44/6/Rev.1; RB, appropriations; XB, estimated expenditures.

57. Direct allocations of RB and XB funds to programmes are given in annexes II and III, which also show the rankings of each programme in terms of RB and XB funds for the biennia 1986-1987 and 1988-1989. These annexes also show percentage resource growth of 1988-1989 over 1986-1987 by programme and rankings with respect to this measure.

58. The five largest and five smallest programmes in terms of RB and XB allocations in 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 are shown in table 4. Two general features of the role of direct resource allocations to programmes in ECA are clear from this information:

(a) RB allocations are relatively stable. The largest five programmes remained the same in both biennia, as did the smallest five programmes. Overall, 8 out of 16 programmes did not change rank;

(b) XB allocations are more volatile than RB. Even here, however, the five largest programmes remained the same in both biennia, and six programmes did not change rank. However, the range of positive and negative growth was much greater for XB than RB.

Table 4. Comparison of regular budget and extrabudgetary allocations to programmes, 1986-1987 and 1988-1989 biennia

A. Five programmes with the greatest resources

Regular budget	Rank a/	Extrabudgetary funds	Rank a/
Development issues and policies	1, 1	Development issues and policies	1, 1
Industrial development	2, 2	Population	2, 2
International trade	3, 4	Food and agriculture	3, 5
Statistics	4, 5	Transport	4, 4
Transport	5, 3	Statistics	5, 3

B. Five programmes with the least resources

Regular budget	Rank a/	Extrabudgetary funds	Rank a/
Human settlements	12, 13	International trade	12, 11
Transnational corporations	13, 15	Human settlements	13, 14
Energy	14, 14	Environment	14, 10
Environment	15, 12	Marine affairs	15, 15
Marine affairs	16, 16	Transnational corporations	16, 16

Source: Annexes II and III.

a/ Respective ranks in programme resources for 1986-1987 and 1988-1989.

D. Effect of extrabudgetary funds on priorities

59. There is no single measure of the importance of XB funds on programme priorities. Three important measures illustrated in table 5 are: (a) the proportion of XB funds in a programme's total resources; (b) the direction and volume of growth in XB funds in comparison with RB funds; and (c) the stability of this supplementary funding.

Table 5. Measures of the effect of extrabudgetary funds on priorities, 1986-1987 and 1988-1989

Rank in terms of RB 1986-1987	Programme of activities	XB as proportion of RB 1988-1989 (percentage)	Growth, 1988-1989 over 1986-1987 RB (percentage)	Growth, 1988-1989 over 1986-1987 XB (percentage)	Stable and large XB support?
1	Food and agriculture	117	10.6	31.8	Yes
2	Industrial development	101	2.8	48.3	Yes
3	International trade and development finance	19	-4.9	-50.2	
4	Statistics	216	-2.2	25.5	Yes
5	Transport, Communications and Tourism	159	16.4	5.6	Yes
6	Social development	173	5.5	-7.3	Yes
7	Food and agriculture	208	10.2	-5.6	Yes
8	Natural resources	16	22.6	-80.8	
9	Population	537	12.2	19.8	Yes
10	Public administration and finance	84	1.8	-62.7	
11	Science and technology	304	24.8	95.1	Yes
12	Human settlements	48	-23.3	-56.8	
13	Transnational corporations	-	-34.1	-	
14	Energy and development	87	-8.3	-63.2	
15	Environment	154	63.5	110.9	Yes
16	Marine affairs	a/	a/	a/	a/

Source: Annexes II and III.

a/ RB funding of $10,100 in 1988-1989; XB zero in 1986-1987, $202,900 in 1988-1989.

60. It is clear from table 5 that for eight of ECA's 16 programmes extrabudgetary sources are the predominant form of funding, and for 12 out of the 16 programmes XB funding is of great significance. In only two of these cases, energy and public administration, has this funding shown a significant decline in 1988-1989 compared to 1986-1987.

61. It is possible to construct analytical measures from the data in annexes II and III that can serve as rough indicators of the impact of XB funds on resource allocations to programmes. One such measure can be constructed by comparing a programme's rank in terms of the allocation of RB resources with its rank in terms of total resources available to it after XB funds are added. This measure, shown in table 6, indicates that the effect of XB resources is to upgrade significantly the relative importance of the programmes on population, science and technology and

food and agriculture and significantly downgrade those on international trade and finance, industrial development and national resources.

Table 6. Impact of extrabudgetary funds on resource allocations to programmes, 1988-1989

Rank in terms of RB resources, 1986-1987	Programme of activity	Rank in terms of resource allocations, 1988-1989			Difference in rank: RB minus total resources
		XB	RB	Total resources	
1	Development issues and policies	1	1	1	-
2	Industrial development	2	7	6	-4
3	International trade and development finance	4	11	9	-5
4	Statistics	5	3	4	1
5	Transport, communications and tourism	3	4	3	-
6	Social development	8	6	7	1
7	Food and agriculture	7	5	5	2
8	Natural resources	6	13	10	-4
9	Population	9	2	2	7
10	Public administration and finance	10	9	11	-1
11	Science and technology	11	8	8	3
12	Human settlements	13	14	14	-1
13	Transnational corporations	15	16	15	-
14	Energy and development	14	12	13	1
15	Environment	12	10	12	-
16	Marine affairs	16	15	16	-

Source: Annexes I and II.

IV. RECOMMENDATIONS

62. CPC is invited to endorse the following propositions, stemming from the findings and recommendations summarized in this report, as a basis for improving the contributions of the ECA programme on development issues and policies to strengthening subregional cooperation in Africa:

(a) Improvements in the performance and effectiveness of the MULPOCs will require a substantial increase in resources in order to enable each of the Centres to be of a viable size;

(b) The increased resources should be part of new efforts to reorient the ECA strategy for subregional cooperation and integration. The process of reorientation should start with an examination of the possibilities for decentralizing the activities and resources of all ECA programmes with subregional activities. Headquarter's activities of ECA could be more effectively focused on strategic central functions, including collection and dissemination of statistics;

(c) To be effective and sustainable, activities in support of subregional cooperation must be closely coordinated with country priorities and strategies.

63. Using these propositions as a framework:

(a) ECA should identify those subprogrammes that should be reoriented and focused wholly on subregional objectives;

(b) A revision of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 should be prepared to reflect the full scope of activities in support of subregional cooperation, and submitted in 1992 in the context of the first revision of the plan, through the ECA Conference of Ministers and CPC, to the Economic and Social Council and the General Assembly;

(c) The proposed revisions should contain indications of the resources required for both existing and additional activities with subregional components.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-second Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/42/16), part one, para. 239.

2/ Ibid., Forty-fourth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/44/16), para. 294.

3/ Ibid., Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 5 (A/43/5), vol. I, paras. 88-91 and 177-180.

4/ Ibid., Forty-fifth Session, Supplement No. 16 (A/45/16), part one, paras. 368 and 369.

5/ Ibid., para. 263 (a).

Notes (continued)

6/ Ibid., Thirtieth Session, Supplement No. 6A (A/10006/Add.1), part I, sect. I.

7/ Ibid., Thirty-first Session, Supplement No. 6A (A/31/6/Add.1), vol. II, chap. I, paras. 5-11.

ANNEX I

Substantive support of MULPOCs in the 1990-1991 work programme of ECA

Programme of activity	Programme elements in the 1990-1991 work programme with outputs citing outputs for MULPOCs as primary users
Executive direction and management	[1.2; MULPOCs not primary user]
Food and agriculture	1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4, 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4
Marine affairs	NIL
Development issues and policies	4.2, 4.3
Environment	NIL
Human settlements	NIL
Industrial development	1.1, 2.2, 2.3, 3.1, 3.2, 4.1
International trade and development finance	NIL
Transnational corporations	NIL
Natural resources	2.1
Energy and development	1.2, 1.3
Population	NIL
Public administration and finance	NIL
Science and technology	NIL
Social development	1.1
Statistics	NIL
Transport, communications and tourism	1.1, 2.3

Source: A/44/6/Rev.1, sect. 13.

ANNEX II

Regular budget resources of ECA: final appropriation to programmes, 1986-1987 and 1988-1989

Programme of activity	1986-1987 Thousands of US dollars	Rank	1988-1989 Thousands of US dollars	Rank	Percentage of growth	Rank
Development issues and policies	7 941.0	1	8 781.9	1	10.6	6
Industrial development	2 394.3	2	2 462.2	2	2.8	8
International trade and development finance	2 321.1	3	2 206.3	4	-4.9	11
Statistics	2 015.7	4	1 971.7	5	-2.2	10
Transport, communications and tourism	2 000.8	5	2 328.8	3	16.4	4
Social development	1 538.3	6	1 454.1	8	-5.5	12
Food and agriculture	1 484.8	7	1 636.2	7	10.2	7
Natural resources	1 482.7	8	1 818.1	6	22.6	3
Population	952.3	9	1 068.2	9	12.2	5
Public administration and finance	822.1	10	836.9	10	1.8	9
Science and technology	601.5	11	750.7	11	24.8	2
Human settlements	556.1	12	426.6	13	-23.3	14
Transnational corporations	525.0	13	346.2	15	-34.1	15
Energy and development	444.4	14	407.6	14	-8.3	13
Environment	262.6	15	429.4	12	63.5	1
Marine affairs	107.7	16	10.2	16	-90.5	16

Source: Programme Planning and Budget Division, final budget appropriations, projected expenditure performance and expenses for the biennium 1986-1987, memorandum to heads of departments and offices dated 6 June 1988; final budget appropriations and expenses for the biennium 1988-1989, memorandum dated 30 April 1990. The figure for the programme on transnational corporations is from section 9 of the programme budget for the biennium; all other figures are for section 13 (ECA).

ANNEX III

Extrabudgetary resources of ECA: direct allocations to programmes, 1986-1987 and 1988-1989

Programme of activity	1986-1987 Thousands of US dollars	Rank	1988-1989 Thousands of US dollars	Rank	Percentage of growth	Rank
Development issues and policies	7 800.8	1	10 283.3	1	31.8	5
Population	4 789.9	2	5 738.7	2	19.8	7
Food and agriculture	3 609.7	3	3 408.9	5	-5.6	9
Transport, communications and tourism	3 507.2	4	3 702.5	4	5.6	8
Statistics	3 228.9	5	4 035.0	3	25.5	6
Social development	2 705.3	6	2 507.8	6	-7.3	10
Public administration and finance	1 879.2	7	700.7	9	-62.7	13
Industrial development	1 682.0	8	2 494.0	7	48.3	4
Natural resources	1 544.4	9	296.8	13	-80.8	15
Science and technology	1 170.2	10	2 282.9	8	95.1	3
Energy and development	967.7	11	356.4	12	-63.2	14
International trade and development, finance	845.8	12	421.2	11	-50.2	11
Human settlements	476.0	13	205.5	14	-56.8	12
Environment	313.8	14	661.9	10	110.9	2
Marine affairs	--	15	202.9	15	n.a.	1
Transnational corporations	--	16	--	16	--	16

Source: Tables 4.2 and 4.3, Biennial report of the Executive Secretary, 1988-1989, Economic Commission for Africa (E/ECA/CM.16/2); plus allocations to programmes in table 1 for all sources except sections 13 (ECA) and 9 (Transnationals).